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SMH Following Recommended Swine Flu Precautions

As a result of the international outbreak of swine flu, Speare Memorial Hospital, under the guidance of the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), is taking precautionary steps to support the state's active surveillance.

As of 4 p.m. today there were no human cases of swine flu in New Hampshire or New England, according to DHHS. However, the state has established a public inquiry line for people to call between 8 a.m. – 8 p.m. with questions about the outbreak, possible symptoms and travel information: 1-888-330-6764. Other information can be found online at http://www.dhhs.state.nh.us/DHHS/DHHS_SITE/default.htm.

According to Ann Graves, SMH's director of infection prevention, swine flu symptoms are much the same as seasonal flu, including fever, sore throat, cough, stuffy nose, chills and overall aches and fatigue. People experiencing these symptoms and have recently traveled to areas where the flu is known to be present (Mexico, California, Texas, Kansas, New York), or been in close contact with someone who recently traveled to infected areas, and/or has a confirmed case of the flu, are instructed to contact their healthcare provider.

PREVENTING THE SPREAD OF INFECTION

There are three things everyone can do to help prevent the spread of infection:

- **Wash Your Hands!** Use soap and warm water, rub together vigorously for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, use alcohol-based hand sanitizers. Always wash hands before touching/eating food, after using the bathroom, taking out the trash, changing a diaper, handling money or playing with a pet.
- **Cover Your Cough/Sneeze.** Many diseases are spread through droplets from coughs and sneezes. Use a tissue and be sure to throw away immediately and wash hands. No tissue available, sneeze/cough into the crook of your elbow, not your hand.
- **Avoid Close Contact.** If you are sick with flu-like symptoms stay away from others. Do not go to school or work. If you need medical treatment, be sure to ask your provider for a mask so you can avoid affecting other people.